

The Royal Marine Camp

San Juan Island
National Historical Park

National Park Service
Department of the Interior



English Camp was founded on March 21, 1860 atop a midden (or trash pile) of clam shells that accumulated over 2,000 years of Indian habitation. The design of the Royal Marine camp reflected the hierarchy of military service with the officers occupying quarters(1) on the terraced hillsides, the enlisted men in barracks(2) on the parade ground(3).

The parade ground functioned as the heart of the camp, giving onto the bay and flanked by buildings that supported the myriad elements of daily life. These included an enlisted men's dining hall(4), hospital(5), docks (6), storehouse(7), library and school(8), carpentry shop(9), formal garden(10) and guard house(11). It was on the parade ground that marines were drilled, exercised and directed

in a score of daily tasks from chipping and painting to tending the vegetable and flower gardens on its margins. This painting drew on many sources to reconstruct the physical appearance of the camp at the height of the joint military occupation in the late 1860s. See if you can find on the grounds the masonry ruins of some of the buildings depicted here.

